



PHILIPPINE DERMATOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CODE *of* ETHICS 2024

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PREAMBLE

The Philippine Dermatological Society (PDS) has created this Code of Ethics which lays down principles and guidelines for adherence by the members who are to observe and practice the highest ethical obligations to their patients, colleagues, and the general public. It utilizes the framework of roles and relationships to concretize the different layers to which ethical concerns and issues may arise. The standards of conduct shall delineate the character of a dermatologist with honorable and respectable behavior.

This Code is aligned with the ethical and legal requirements of medical practice. It espouses standards that are even higher than those expected from the community.

ARTICLE I. FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The foundational principles of this code of ethics are drawn from the Code of Ethics of the Philippine Medical Association and the Hippocratic Oath, reflecting the broader concerns of general physicians. However, recognizing the distinct focus and responsibilities of dermatologists, the Code of Ethics of the PDS is tailored to address the specific ethical considerations in dermatology practice.

1. *Principle of respect for life.* The right to life is inviolable. Life is a necessary condition for all other human good. It shall be protected and fostered at all its stages beginning from conception to the end of life.
2. *Primum non nocere.* The foremost responsibility of the physician is to do no harm to the patient.
3. *Principle of beneficence.* The interest of the patient shall be placed above that of the physician. Societal pressures, financial gains, and administrative exigencies shall not compromise this principle.
4. *Principle of respect for person.* Every person has an intrinsic worth and dignity. Trust shall be central to the physician-patient relationship. Physicians shall respect patient autonomy.
5. *Principle of social justice.* All patients have a right to basic health care and a just process in the allocation of resources.

ARTICLE II. THE PDS DERMATOLOGIST

Section 1. Qualifications

- 1.1 The dermatologist is a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines.
- 1.2 The dermatologist is a graduate of a medical school duly recognized by the Commission on Higher Education.
- 1.3 The dermatologist is licensed to practice medicine in the Philippines or in the country of origin.
- 1.4 The dermatologist is a member of the Philippine Medical Association.
- 1.5 The dermatologist is a graduate of a minimum 3-year residency training program in a PDS-accredited institution or an equivalent dermatology program approved by the PDS Board of Accreditation and the PDS Board of Directors. The dermatologist is a Diplomate of the PDS.
- 1.6 The dermatologist shall observe the PDS Code of Ethics.

Section 2. Competencies

- 2.1 The dermatologist shall practice dermatology based on evidence-based medicine.
- 2.2 The dermatologist shall update himself/herself with new dermatological developments and maintenance of clinical competence.
- 2.3 The dermatologist shall practice the art and science of healing with the highest ethical standards.

Section 3. Finances

- 3.1 The dermatologist shall pay all taxes as mandated by the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 (Tax Code), including the amendments from Republic Act (RA) No. 11534 (CREATE Law) and by RA No. 11494 (Bayanihan 2), other relevant laws, and other applicable levies in the place of practice.
- 3.2 The dermatologist shall balance medical ethics and business ethics in the practice of dermatology.
- 3.3 The dermatologist shall refrain from financial solicitation practices.

Section 4. Code of conduct

- 4.1 The dermatologist is first and foremost a licensed physician and a specialist mandated to be a role model of the highest moral and ethical values. He/She shall uphold one's reputation of observing truth and honesty, integral in maintaining a professional relationship with fellow healthcare providers and preserving the patients' best interest as a priority. He/She shall observe the highest moral and ethical standards in rendering competent medical and dermatological services to the patients and the community, with dedication, compassion, and respect for human rights and dignity.
- 4.2 The dermatologist shall abide by all the rules and regulations of the Society and laws of the country, shall give the highest degree of professionalism to the specialty, and shall observe the self-discipline that is expected of a responsible member of an organization and citizen of the country. He/She shall never engage in criminal acts or illegal activities like forgery, theft, substance abuse, and other crimes defined by law.
- 4.3 The dermatologist shall be committed to pursuing continuous education and research, to apply and advance knowledge and skills, and shall be committed to sharing valuable information with peers and the public. Furthermore, he/she shall diligently attend and engage in continuing education activities.
- 4.4 The dermatologist shall always maintain professional boundaries, ensuring that the patient's well-being and best interests are prioritized in every interaction.

ARTICLE III. THE PROFESSIONAL ROLES OF THE PDS DERMATOLOGIST

Section 1. Overview. The dermatologist may take varied professional roles that may be the source of ethical concern.

1. Clinician role
2. Researcher role
3. Educator role
4. Speaker role
5. Media personality role
6. Community advocate role

7. Elected role
8. Employee role
9. Business role

Section 2. Clinician role

- 2.1 Overview. The clinician role refers to all aspects of patient care. As a medical professional, the dermatologist has a responsibility to ensure that the patients receive the highest standard of care. This responsibility extends beyond providing medical treatment to upholding the patients' best interests.
- 2.2 Qualifications. The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 2.3 Competencies
 - 2.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 2.3.2 The dermatologist shall conduct the clinical practice within the scope of his/her medical education, training, skills, and experience.
 - 2.3.3 In situations where the dermatologist lacks the competence or confidence to provide optimal patient care, he/she shall refer the patient to a colleague with more suitable clinical skills and expertise to handle the case.
- 2.4 Finances
 - 2.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 2.4.2 Professional fees. The dermatologist shall charge patients only for actual services rendered. Professional fees shall be commensurate with services given.
 - 2.4.3 Dispensing products
 - a. Dispensing pharmaceutical products. The dermatologist shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines regarding dispensing of pharmaceutical products, including prescription drug monitoring programs and requirements for record-keeping and reporting. The dermatologist shall abide by the Pharmacy Law (RA 5921) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines.
 - b. Dispensing non-pharmaceutical products (i.e., cosmeceuticals and health-related products). The dermatologist may dispense cosmeceuticals and health-related products to patients in his/her clinic, after complying with the requirements of government regulatory agencies.
 - b.1. Patients shall not be compelled to purchase such products from the dermatologist. The patient shall be informed and given a choice of where to purchase products of the same or similar kind. There shall be no false representation or claim that the medication is a special formula and is not available elsewhere.
 - b.2. The dermatologist shall ensure that dispensed products are labeled according to the FDA guidelines (i.e., generic name, list of active ingredients, expiration dates).
 - b.3. Dispensing of skin home devices with no evidenced-based therapeutic effect for home use is not allowed.
 - b.4. If a dermatologist has distributorship of certain products, he/she shall not limit his/her dispensing to such products. It is the duty of the dispensing dermatologist to monitor the efficacy and safety of the products dispensed.

- b.5. Clinic dispensing shall be limited to one's own patients for their personal use only. The dermatologist shall dispense quantities just enough for the duration of the patient's treatment.

2.5 Code of conduct

2.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

2.5.2 Patient's best interest

- a. *Informed consent.* The dermatologist shall ensure that the patient/s or surrogate decision-maker/s has/have the necessary information to make informed decisions about medical treatment. This includes communicating the diagnosis, prognosis, potential benefits and risks of treatment, and alternative treatment options. The dermatologist shall explain all aspects of medical options and shall have the patient sign the informed consent form after a thorough discussion.
- b. *Patient privacy and confidentiality of health information.* The dermatologist shall consistently demonstrate a commitment to preserving patient privacy. He/She shall be guided by a deep ethical obligation to prioritize the confidentiality of medical information above all else, recognizing that trust and privacy are essential components of the patient-doctor relationship.
- c. *Non-discrimination.* The dermatologist shall not discriminate against patients based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or any other protected characteristic.
- d. *Respectful communication.* The dermatologist shall communicate with the patient and/or surrogate decision-maker respectfully, using language that can be easily understood, avoiding technical medical jargon, and considering cultural differences.
- e. *Continuity of care.* The dermatologist shall ensure that the patient receives continuous and comprehensive care throughout the course of treatment. He/She shall also consider the patient's preferences, values, and beliefs when making treatment recommendations.
- f. *Conflicts of interest.* The dermatologist shall acknowledge, recognize, and address conflicts of interest that could compromise his/her professional judgment or harm a patient's best interests. This includes avoiding financial relationships that could influence the dermatologist's medical decision-making.
- g. *Use of pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical products.* The dermatologist shall only utilize health technology (i.e., medicines, medical devices, equipment, and procedures) following key ethical guidelines and regulatory standards, including off-label use.

2.5.3 Patient care. A dermatologist shall conduct the clinical practice within the scope of his/her medical education, training, skills, and experience. In situations that no longer cover the dermatologist's competence and confidence in carrying on the responsibility of patient care, he/she shall refer the patient to another colleague who has more appropriate clinical skills and expertise to handle the case.

2.5.4 Confidentiality of medical information

- a. *Data privacy.* The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 2.5.2.b of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024 regarding the confidentiality of medical information. This includes, but is not limited to, medical history, diagnosis, treatment, and personal details. He/She shall ensure that all medical records and information are securely stored and accessed

only by authorized personnel for the purpose of providing care to the patients.

- b. *Disclosure of information.* The dermatologist shall not disclose any medical information or sensitive details about the patient to any unauthorized individuals or entities, unless required by law or with explicit consent from the patient. Exceptions may be made in cases of imminent danger to the patient or others, with the sole intention of protecting the well-being of those involved. Any disclosure of medical information shall be approached with the utmost discretion and with due respect for the patient's autonomy and privacy.
- c. *Professional communication.* When communicating with other healthcare professionals or third parties involved in the patient's care, the dermatologist shall exercise caution and adhere to professional standards of confidentiality. Sharing medical information, including but not limited to scientific conferences, shall be done in a manner that respects the patient's privacy.
- d. *Data security.* The dermatologist has the responsibility to implement robust data security measures to safeguard electronic medical records and other forms of patient information. These measures shall comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, aiming to protect the confidentiality and integrity of medical data and prevent unauthorized access or breaches of patient privacy.

2.5.5 Voluntary severances of services

- a. *Professional termination protocol.* The dermatologist shall acknowledge the importance of a patient's right to choose his/her physician. Should circumstances arise where the doctor-patient relationship becomes untenable or compromises the quality of care, the dermatologist shall make the decision to sever the relationship with utmost professionalism and empathy.
- b. *Reasonable notice period.* Upon making the decision to sever the doctor-patient relationship, the dermatologist shall be obligated to provide the patient with reasonable notice so that the patient has ample time to secure alternative care and medication, particularly if the termination of services may impact the patient's health management.
- c. *Patient notification and communication.* Throughout the process of voluntary severance, the dermatologist shall ensure effective and compassionate communication with the patient to explain the reason/s for the decision and to address any concerns or questions raised by the patient, all while maintaining the patient's confidentiality and privacy.
- d. *Communication of medical information.* In adherence to professional standards and guidelines, the dermatologist shall facilitate a smooth transfer of medical information to subsequent care providers upon request, ensuring the continuity of care for the patient and preserving the pertinent medical history for future reference.

2.5.6 Patient solicitation

- a. *Personal relationships.* The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

- b. Financial solicitation.
 - b.1 The dermatologist shall ensure that all medical recommendations are based on the best interests and needs of the patient.
 - b.2 The dermatologist shall not engage in undue financial solicitation practices that could compromise the patient's trust, such as:
 - i. the promotion of unnecessary treatments or products solely for the purpose of financial gain;
 - ii. giving/receiving referral fees and rebates to/from, other doctors, suppliers, and patients;
 - iii. engaging in fee-splitting; and
 - iv. engaging in ghost practice.
 - b.3 Government-initiated medical tourism programs are not considered forms of patient solicitation.
- c. Promotion of practice. All marketing and promotional activities shall be transparent, accurate, and informative, and shall not exploit or manipulate the patient's vulnerability or insecurities. It is imperative to provide honest and unbiased information that empowers patients to make informed decisions about their dermatological care.
- d. Patient channeling. The dermatologist shall refrain from requesting non-medical personnel to refer patients to him/her.

Section 3. Researcher role

- 3.1. Overview. The researcher role involves engaging in continuous research activities to advance medical knowledge and improve patient care. This includes conducting clinical trials, publishing scientific papers, and staying updated with the latest developments in dermatology. Through active participation in research, the dermatologist contributes to the understanding and treatment of skin conditions, ultimately benefiting patients and the broader medical community.
- 3.2 Qualifications
 - 3.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024, and shall possess a solid understanding of basic research principles.
 - 3.2.2 The dermatologist shall uphold the integrity of both the research and the researchers in clinical and basic research.
- 3.3 Competencies
 - 3.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 3.3.2 The dermatologist shall obtain a valid certificate of good clinical practice to ensure adherence to the highest standards of clinical research conduct.
- 3.4 Finances
 - 3.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 3.4.2 The dermatologist shall observe transparency in the financial aspects of the research.
- 3.5 Code of conduct
 - 3.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 3.5.2 The dermatologist shall conduct all research and academic activities in full compliance with ethical, institutional, and government guidelines.
 - 3.5.3 The dermatologist shall have his/her research protocol approved by an Institutional Review Board or an Institutional Ethics Board or its equivalent.

- 3.5.4 For industry-sponsored clinical trials, the dermatologist shall have intellectual freedom and responsibility. Professional relations with the industry regarding research shall advance the best interests of patients and dermatology as a specialty. (Details of the guidelines on research may be found in the PDS Administrative Manual.)
- 3.5.5 The dermatologist shall adhere to ethical guidelines for authorship and publication, as outlined in the National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants (2022). Particular attention shall be given to the following:
 - a. The dermatologist shall not claim as his/her own intellectual property that which belongs to others. Proper acknowledgment shall be given when using or referring to the work of others.
 - b. The dermatologist shall not exaggerate the significance of results for whatever personal gain this may bring to the author/s.
- 3.5.6 Consensus guidelines and position papers that represent the collective voice of the PDS shall be approved by the Board of Directors (BOD) prior to their publication.

Section 4. Educator role

- 4.1 Overview. The educator role refers to the teaching of, and training in, dermatology or other fields of competence in medical school, during residency, fellowship, or other academic/training activities.
- 4.2 Qualifications
 - 4.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 4.2.2 The dermatologist shall have a good understanding of the topic/s that will be taught.
- 4.3 Competencies
 - 4.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 4.3.2 The dermatologist shall be updated with current issues and controversies on the topic/s that will be taught.
- 4.4 Finances
 - 4.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 4.4.2 The dermatologist shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to educational materials, funding sources, or industry relationships, and shall ensure transparency in all educational interactions.
- 4.5 Code of conduct
 - 4.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 4.5.2 The dermatologist shall ensure that educational content is scientifically accurate, evidence-based, up-to-date, balanced, and objective.
 - 4.5.3 The dermatologist shall have complete intellectual freedom in all academic activities such as lectures and dissertations. He/she shall discuss a given topic as completely and impartially as possible.
 - 4.5.4 The dermatologist shall be responsible for presenting a broad range of scientific viewpoints and therapeutic options relevant to the topic.
 - 4.5.5 The dermatologist shall use generic names of therapeutic options (drugs, equipment, therapeutic procedures, etc.), but in situations where the use of brand names is unavoidable, the brand names of other therapeutic options shall be likewise included.

- 4.5.6 The dermatologist shall maintain the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct in all educational activities. He/She shall behave in a manner befitting a medical professional in all academic fora. He/She shall not use obscene language, slides, videos, or similar teaching tools.
- 4.5.7 The dermatologist shall foster an inclusive and respectful learning environment that values diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds.
- 4.5.8 The dermatologist shall encourage active participation, critical thinking, and independent learning among students/attendees, fostering their intellectual growth and development.
- 4.5.9 The dermatologist shall engage in ongoing professional development and self-assessment to enhance teaching effectiveness, knowledge, and skills in dermatology education.
- 4.5.10 The dermatologist shall be open to feedback to further improve and hone one's educator skills.

Section 5. Speaker role

- 5.1 Overview. The speaker role refers to the teaching of dermatology or other fields of competence in conventions, continuing medical education (CME) activities, or lay fora.
- 5.2 Qualifications
 - 5.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 5.2.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 5.3 Competencies
 - 5.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 5.3.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3.2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 5.4 Finances
 - 5.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 5.4.2 The dermatologist shall disclose any honorarium received for speaking engagements.
 - 5.4.3 The dermatologist may receive compensation, including reasonable reimbursement for travel, lodging, and meal expenses incurred while providing such services.
- 5.5 Code of conduct
 - 5.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 5.5.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 5.5.3 The content of the lecture shall not be influenced, modified, not shaped by representatives of, or financial contributors from the industry.
 - a. Scientific data generated by the industry-supported research may be used.
 - b. Technical assistance in preparing slides and other presentation material may be accepted as long as this is related to the topic.
 - c. The company shall have no input on the actual content of the material.
 - 5.5.4 The dermatologist shall disclose any financial or non-financial relationships at the beginning of his/her presentation or participation in CME activities. He/She shall disclose any potential "conflicts of interest" in any of his/her public speaking engagements.
 - 5.5.5 The dermatologist may act as a speaker for biopharmaceutical and medical device companies, providing expertise in areas such as therapeutics, patient care, and drug safety monitoring. However, such engagement shall not bind him/her to endorse, prescribe, or recommend any specific product or device.

- 5.5.6 The dermatologist shall comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines governing interactions between professionals and pharmaceutical companies or industries.
- 5.5.7 The dermatologist shall exercise due diligence and prudence when speaking to and training non-doctors, to uphold patient safety and protect the practice of medicine.
- 5.5.8 The dermatologist who is invited to speak to a local non-PDS society shall abide by the speaker's stratification guidelines approved by the PDS Board of Directors and shall seek clearance and guidance from the PDS Committee on Ethics prior to accepting the invitation.

Section 6. Media personality role

- 6.1 Overview. The media personality role refers to all aspects pertaining to quadrimedia exposure and interaction of the dermatologist.
- 6.2 Qualifications
 - 6.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.2.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3.1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 6.3 Competencies
 - 6.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.3.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3.2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 6.4 Finances
 - 6.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.4.2 The dermatologist shall not endorse any medical or health product through media channels, whether it offers financial or non-financial benefits to the dermatologist.
- 6.5 Code of conduct
 - 6.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.5.2 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 3.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.5.3 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 4.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 6.5.4 The dermatologist shall be dignified and professional in manner and appearance in all media. His/Her statements shall reflect his/her professional knowledge, training, or experience according to evidence-based medicine.
 - 6.5.5 The dermatologist shall discuss treatment for the purpose of giving health information but not to the extent of treating specific cases that will encourage self-medication. In certain medical conditions, the dermatologist shall emphasize evidence-based health information, discuss differential diagnoses, and promote disease prevention. The dermatologist shall use generic drug names, and not endorse nor favor any particular merchandise, drug, or procedure for any condition. Other current evidence-based treatments shall be mentioned.
 - 6.5.6 The dermatologist shall encourage the public to consult a PDS dermatologist for proper evaluation and management. He/She shall also define what a board-certified or board-eligible dermatologist is. It is also preferable to promote the PDS contact information and website address.
 - 6.5.7 The dermatologist shall not allow the use of his/her name, image position, or stature as a dermatologist in any commercial or advertisement of any medical or health product.
 - 6.5.8 If the dermatologist is involved in multimedia, he/she shall mention only membership and official positions in academic and professional organizations, office, clinic, and/or hospital affiliations and contact details, and website address.

- 6.5.9 The dermatologist shall not initiate any laudatory article about himself/herself in connection with his/her medical practice in newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and social media accounts.
- 6.5.10 In case of interviews for published media whether print or digital, the dermatologist shall make arrangements to review and approve the final article prior to the publication, to correct any misinformation or errors at the earliest possible time. If an article is published with incorrect information or without the dermatologist's consent or knowledge, he/she shall write a disclaimer or protest letter to the publication concerned. He/She shall submit a copy of the article and the disclaimer to the Committee on Ethics of the PDS.
- 6.5.11 Articles written by a dermatologist shall be evidence-based. He/She shall disclose connections with pharmaceutical or health product companies.
- 6.5.12 Social media
 - a. Maintaining professionalism online
 - i. The dermatologist shall treat colleagues with respect. Any social media influence or comment that can undermine the professional integrity and the well-being of a colleague or the Society is highly discouraged.
 - ii. The dermatologist shall refrain from posting information online that will compromise patient confidentiality, dignity, and privacy. He/She shall not take selfies, groupies, or videos during encounters with patients that include the patient/s, the patient's body parts, or surgical specimen without the patient's consent.
 - iii. The dermatologist shall ensure that the information posted or shared about other people or organizations is accurate and may be easily verified as true in respected, credible sources. He/She shall provide credit and/or links back to sources when sharing information.
 - iv. The dermatologist shall avoid making comments/statements that can be perceived as prejudiced against gender, race, religion, or political belief.
 - v. Whatever a dermatologist posts online in relation to his/her clinical expertise shall be of benefit to patients and the public. He/She shall prioritize the promotion and advancement of health rather than medical products.
 - vi. The dermatologist shall know the laws and professional standards that govern a dermatological practice.
 - vii. The dermatologist shall not initiate a personal online relationship with an individual in a subordinate position. Exceptions may be made for educational experiences. He/She shall be mindful of the potential for misinterpretation of relationships such as faculty-student, supervisor-employee, and doctor-patient in social interactions.
 - viii. The dermatologist shall encourage the public to consult a PDS dermatologist for proper evaluation and management. He/She shall define what a board-certified dermatologist is and shall promote the contact information of PDS and the PDS website address.
 - b. Promoting practice or advertising products
 - i. The dermatologist may use the internet in the promotion of his/her medical practice. However, internet postings shall contain only the following: 1) name of the physician, field of specialty; 2) clinic address and contact details, and/or hospital affiliation; 3) office hours; 4) photos of the doctor and/or clinic; and 5) website address. The

dermatologist may create his/her own website. Services and procedures that are evidence-based and special equipment that are FDA-approved (or its equivalent), special certificates or diplomas, postgraduate training, and current connections with hospitals or clinics may be enumerated.

- ii. The dermatologist shall not commercially endorse any medical or health product.
- iii. To keep the public's trust in the medical profession, the dermatologist shall disclose conflicts of interest when discussing a product. Evidence-based medical advice shall be clearly differentiated from experience-based advice, personal opinions, or commercial advertisements. Disclosures alone are not sufficient and the best way to avoid conflict of interest is not to engage in product marketing in the first place. Disclosure is not enough to waive the fact that the dermatologist is endorsing or advertising a product.

Section 7. Community advocate role

7.1 Overview. The community advocate role refers to all engagements with communities.

7.2 Qualifications

- 7.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 7.2.2 The dermatologist shall know the principles of community medicine.
- 7.2.3 The dermatologist shall be aware of his/her responsibilities to the community and to society, and shall discharge his/her civic duties with the view of enhancing the stature of dermatology as a specialty.

7.3 Competencies

- 7.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 7.3.2 The dermatologist shall be aware of the guidelines in community work, especially with special populations, such as indigenous people, people deprived of liberty, and the like.

7.4 Finances

- 7.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3.3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 7.4.2 The dermatologist shall provide free medical services to vulnerable populations on a voluntary basis.

7.5 Code of conduct

- 7.5.1 The dermatologist may assume the educator role in the community and shall comply with Article III, Section 3.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 7.5.2 During medical missions, the dermatologist shall provide FDA-approved, properly labeled, and unexpired medicines.

Section 8. Elected role

8.1 Overview. The elected role refers to all elected position/s in any association/organization, including but not limited to the PDS.

8.2 Qualifications

- 8.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 8.2.2 The dermatologist shall assume his/her position as elected or appointed by the organization.
- 8.2.3 The dermatologist shall have the minimum qualifications set by the organization for the position. For PDS, the dermatologist shall comply with Article VI, Section 4 of the 2023 PDS Constitution and Bylaws.

8.3 Competencies

8.3.1 The dermatologist shall possess the minimum competencies expected by the organization for the elective or appointive position.

8.3.2 For PDS, the dermatologist shall comply with the minimum competencies specified in the implementing guidelines of the Society.

8.4 Finances

8.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

8.4.2 The dermatologist shall disclose any token or honorarium received for such a position.

8.4.3 The dermatologist shall observe proper financial procedure and documentation of the organization.

8.5 Code of conduct

8.5.1 As a leader in an organization, the dermatologist shall swear to uphold the oath of office as follows:

- a. Exercise powers of the office and fulfill responsibilities in good faith and best interests of the organization;
- b. Exercise responsibilities with due diligence, care, and skill in a prudent manner;
- c. Respect and support the organization's bylaws, policies, code of conduct, and decisions of the Board and membership;
- d. Keep confidential all information learned about donors, grantees, personnel, or any other matters specifically determined by a board motion to be matters of confidence, including matters dealt with during in-camera meetings of the Board;
- e. Conduct oneself in the spirit of collegiality and respect for the collective decisions of the Board; and
- f. Immediately declare any personal (real or perceived) conflict of interest that may come to his/her attention.

8.5.2 As a member of the Board of Directors in an organization, the dermatologist shall commit to conducting himself/herself in a manner that models the high standards of accountability of the organization by:

- a. Supporting the objectives of the organization;
- b. Serving the overall best interests of the organization rather than any particular constituency;
- c. Enhancing credibility and goodwill of the organization;
- d. Respecting the principles of fair play and due process;
- e. Demonstrating respect for individuals in all areas related to racial, social, cultural, linguistic, political, religious diversity, and life circumstances;
- f. Giving respect and fair consideration to opposing views;
- g. Demonstrating due diligence and dedication in preparation and attendance at meetings, special events, and all activities on behalf of the organization;
- h. Ensuring that the financial affairs of the organization are conducted in a responsible and transparent manner with due regard for fiduciary responsibilities and public trusteeship;
- i. Avoiding real and perceived conflict of interest;
- j. Conforming with the bylaws and policies approved by the Board; and

- k. Publicly demonstrating acceptance, respect, and support for decisions legitimately taken in the transaction of the organization's business.
- 8.5.3 Furthermore, as a leader in any organization, the dermatologist shall not:
- a. Criticize fellow leaders and members, or their opinions, outside of the board room;
 - b. Use the organization, or the position, for personal advantage or that of friends, relatives or associates;
 - c. Discuss the confidential proceedings of the Board outside of the board room;
 - d. Declare not to vote on an issue before hearing the discussion and becoming fully informed on the issue;
 - e. Interfere with the duties of staff, or undermine the authority of the employee's ability to perform his/her duties, except as provided in the terms of reference for any standing committee on which he/she serves; and,
 - f. Speak for, or on behalf of, the organization unless specifically authorized to do so, and this includes making statements on social media.

Section 9. Employee role

- 9.1 Overview. The employee role refers to all aspects of being under an employer whether corporate/private or government/public. This includes any position, whether at the top or bottom of the employment scale, as long as the dermatologist is employed or governed by an employment contract. In this role, the dermatologist shall always remember that he/she is first and foremost a physician, and his/her principles shall not be compromised when entering into a contract for employment where his/her expertise as a dermatologist is required. Therefore, his/her behavior and conduct shall reflect the highest moral and ethical standards of the medical profession.
- 9.2 Qualifications
- 9.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 9.2.2 The dermatologist shall fulfill all the requirements specified by his/her employer, as governed by the employment contract.
- 9.3 Competencies
- 9.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 9.3.2 The dermatologist shall possess all the minimum competencies as specified in his/her employment contract.
- 9.4 Finances
- 9.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 9.4.2 The dermatologist shall observe proper financial procedure and documentation of the business.
- 9.5 Code of conduct
- 9.5.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
 - 9.5.2 Employment in health maintenance organizations and private establishments
 - a. The dermatologist shall be under the jurisdiction of the employer only in administrative matters.
 - b. The employed dermatologist shall have full autonomy and responsibility over the diagnosis, treatment, and general disposition of a patient whose well-being is paramount in all cases at all times, and shall not be influenced by financial consideration.

- c. The dermatologist shall closely coordinate with the licensed pharmacist or chemist in charge of the production of in-house drugs and cosmetics to ensure strict adherence to pharmacy laws and ethical guidelines.
- d. In case a dermatologist is asked to lecture on medical and in particular, on dermatological issues or in-house products for his/her employer, he/she shall tackle the subject matter scientifically and objectively without bias. Generic names of drugs and equipment shall be used.
- e. The dermatologist shall not appear in nor place advertisements of any kind especially in the salons, facial centers, or spas where he/she is employed except for a mention of his/her name when the establishment is being introduced to the public for the first time.

9.5.3 Employment in pharmaceutical companies

- a. The dermatologist shall ensure that he/she does not take advantage of the health product industry, nor shall he/she allow himself/herself to be exploited in this relationship. The dermatologist shall not solicit favors from the biopharmaceutical and medical device companies for personal interest or gain.
- b. The presence of a drug/medical device company as a booth exhibitor or as a major or minor sponsor in PDS conventions is not an endorsement of the drug/medical device company and its products by the Society.
- c. The dermatologist may be engaged as a resource person in the biopharmaceutical and medical device companies to provide information or advice on topics such as therapeutics, specific needs of patients, and pharmacovigilance. This relationship shall not bind the dermatologist to promote, prescribe, or recommend a particular equipment or product.
- d. The dermatologist who is also a medical director or a consultant of a pharmaceutical company shall uphold ethical standards, as follows:
 - i. He/She may screen and approve all advertisements, claims, prints, leaflets, brochures, product labels, and product inserts produced by the company. He/She shall ensure that all claims have corresponding literature, and clinical and research studies to support them. He/She shall also make sure that advertisements and prints follow the requirements set by the Philippine FDA and the Ad Standards Council, or its equivalent.
 - ii. He/She shall sign only medical claims and answer questions pertaining only to medical issues coming from the field force or other doctors (e.g., A drug company's letter to dermatologists regarding precautions for a specific drug is signed by its medical director). He/She shall not sign nor endorse advertisements of products except if he/she is also the marketing director.
 - iii. He/She shall advise the company on whom to invite as consultants or speakers for scientific sessions here or abroad. In dermatological fora sponsored by his/her company, the speaker he/she chooses or recommends shall be PDS board-certified.
 - iv. He/She shall advise or choose the institutions or clinics where the company's research studies, or clinical trials will be best conducted.

- v. He/She shall not be bound to prescribe only his/her company's products, nor be a speaker and/or adviser for his/her company alone.
- vi. He/She shall be free to choose the best products for his/her own patients. However, the dermatologist, being duty bound to the pharmaceutical company, may be allowed to give the public information regarding their products in fora and multi-media interviews in a factual manner.
- vii. He/She shall not endorse any product of his/her employer as superior to other pharmaceutical products.
- viii. He/She shall mention only the generic name of drugs except when brand names are relevant to any study being presented.

9.5.4 Employment in the government. The dermatologist who is employed in any government establishment/institution shall observe the Code of Conduct specified in Article III, Section 8.4.1 a-c of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024 and R.A. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees).

Section 10. Business role

10.1 Overview. The business role refers to all businesses of the dermatologist which shall include the business of medical/dermatological practice and other businesses apart from the practice of dermatology.

10.2 Qualifications

10.1.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 1 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

10.1.2 The dermatologist shall be responsible for the business of medical/dermatological practice and/or other businesses apart from the practice of dermatology.

10.3 Competencies

10.3.1 The dermatologist shall comply with the competencies stated in Article II, Section 2 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

10.3.2 The dermatologist shall be aware of the duties and responsibilities of the business of medical/dermatological practice and /or other businesses apart from the practice of dermatology.

10.4 Finances

10.4.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

10.4.2 The dermatologist shall observe proper financial procedure and documentation of the business of medical/dermatological practice and/or other businesses apart from the practice of dermatology.

10.5 Code of conduct

10.5.1 The business of medical/dermatological practice. The business of medical/dermatological practice refers to all aspects related to maintaining a dermatologic practice apart from patient care. However, in discharging this role, the dermatologist shall not forget that he/she is first and foremost a physician and is not in practice primarily for business. Therefore, his/her behavior and conduct shall reflect the highest moral and ethical standards of the medical profession.

- a. The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

- b. The dermatologist shall provide necessary information about himself/herself as a qualified dermatologist to the general public under ethical and moral standards. For the promotion of medical practice, the dermatologist may:
 - i. Use professional cards, and put notices in newspaper classified advertisement sections, souvenir programs, directories, and magazines. The following may be mentioned or posted for identification: name, specialty or subspecialty, pictures, the address of the clinic and contact numbers, website address, and social media information. Services, procedures, or special equipment offered shall not be enumerated. The dermatologist shall instead encourage the public to communicate in private with his/her clinic for more information.
 - ii. Create his/her own website. Services and procedures that are evidence-based and special equipment that are FDA-approved (or its equivalent), special certificates or diplomas, postgraduate training, and current connections with hospitals or clinics may be enumerated.
 - iii. Use the internet in the promotion of his/her medical practice, however, internet postings that will be placed in the public domain shall contain only the following: 1) name of the physician, field of specialty; 2) clinic address and/or hospital affiliation; 3) office hours and contact numbers; 4) photos of the doctor and/or clinic.
 - iv. Inside the clinic, services and procedures that are evidence-based and special equipment that are FDA-approved (or its equivalent), special certificates or diplomas, postgraduate training, and connections with hospitals or clinics may be enumerated.
 - v. For members of good standing, membership with the Philippine Dermatological Society may be mentioned. The PDS Seal of Excellence may be displayed.
 - vi. Signboards shall not exceed 1 x 2 meters in size.
 - c. Testimonials, publishing, or airing one's superiority or claims of exclusivity in expertise are considered self-promotion and are discouraged.
 - d. The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024 on professional fees and dispensing.
- 10.5.2 Other business/es apart from the practice of dermatology. This role refers to all aspects related to business/es apart from the practice of dermatology. This role shall be governed by ethical and moral standards as specified in the current code of business ethics. However, as previously stated, the dermatologist shall remember that he/she is first and foremost a physician and shall conduct himself/herself with the highest moral and ethical standards when his/her role shifts to a business owner apart from the medical profession.
- a. The dermatologist shall comply with all government-mandated licenses and procedures for putting up a business.
 - b. The dermatologist shall balance medical ethics and business ethics.

ARTICLE IV. THE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE DERMATOLOGIST

Section 1. Overview. Article IV outlines the various professional relationships expected of a dermatologist in their practice. It covers interactions with patients, other healthcare professionals, organizations, government agencies, business companies, and the community.

1. Relationship with patients
2. Relationship with professionals and other healthcare providers
3. Relationship with organizations
4. Relationship with government agencies
5. Relationship with business companies
6. Relationship with community

Section 2. Relationship with patients

- 2.1 Overview. The dermatologist-patient relationship. As a medical professional, the dermatologist has the responsibility to ensure that his/her patients receive the highest standard of care. This responsibility extends beyond providing medical treatment to upholding the patient's best interest. The dermatologist and patient shall agree on the clinical services to be provided.
- 2.2 Code of conduct. This relationship shall be governed by Article III, Sections 1.3 and 1.4 in the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- 2.3 Relationship with patient's family and friends
 - 2.3.1 Overview. In certain situations, the doctor-patient relationship will include the participation of the patient's family and friends.
 - 2.3.2 Code of conduct
 - a. The dermatologist shall maintain professional boundaries with the patient's family and friends.
 - b. The dermatologist shall not use social networks to build or pursue professional relationships with patients and their families and friends.

Section 3: Relationship with healthcare professionals and other healthcare providers

- 3.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall maintain a good relationship with medical professionals, allied health professionals, and other healthcare providers and non-medical professionals.
- 3.2 Code of conduct
 - 3.2.1 Medical professionals
 - a. Upholding of colleague's honor.
 - i. The dermatologist shall respect the rights of his/her colleagues in the practice of the medical profession and dermatology as a specialty.
 - ii. He/She shall deal with colleagues honorably, fairly, and honestly.
 - iii. In cases involving an erring colleague, the dermatologist shall practice fraternal correction by first approaching him/her kindly and respectfully to call attention to the unethical behavior.
 - b. Professional courtesy to colleagues. The dermatologist shall provide courtesy to colleagues and waive his/her professional fee when providing essential and non-cosmetic concerns to colleagues and their first-degree relatives.

- c. Sharing of medical advances. The dermatologist shall share knowledge, unless it is inimical to the best interest of the PDS and dermatologic practice, and shall uphold the principles of universal healthcare.
- d. Limits of consultation services
 - i. The dermatologist shall consult other experts in difficult or doubtful cases, or whenever it appears that the quality of medical service may be enhanced thereby.
 - ii. The dermatologist may choose whom to serve, except in emergencies where he/she shall render service to the best of his/her ability until the patient is stabilized. Medical service may be discontinued only after the patient is properly notified and adequately endorsed to the next caregiver.
- e. Treatment of another doctor's patient
 - i. The dermatologist shall not take over the care of the patient already under another dermatologist except under the following circumstances:
 - i.a It is an emergency;
 - i.b The previous dermatologist has relinquished the patient's care;
 - i.c The attending dermatologist specifically requests that another dermatologist take over temporarily; or
 - i.d The patient or the patient's legal guardian has dispensed with the services of the attending dermatologist.
 - ii. When a second opinion is sought by the attending dermatologist, the patient remains under the care of the attending dermatologist and shall be sent back to the original dermatologist unless the patient or the patient's legal guardian directs otherwise.
 - iii. When substituting for a colleague in his/her absence from his/her own practice, a dermatologist shall give the patients the same quality of service that he/she would extend to his/her own patients. He/She shall endorse these patients back to their primary dermatologist promptly unless the patient or patient's legal guardian directs otherwise.

3.2.2 Nurses, allied medical professionals, and other healthcare providers

- a. The dermatologist shall respect the rights of nurses, allied medical professionals, and other healthcare providers.
- b. He/She shall conduct himself/herself professionally and deal with them honorably, fairly, and honestly.

3.2.3 Non-medical professionals

- a. The dermatologist shall respect the rights of other professionals.
- b. He/She shall conduct himself/herself professionally and deal with them honorably, fairly, and honestly.

Section 4: Relationship with organizations (medical and non-medical)

4.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall have the option to join organizations.

4.2 Code of conduct

- 4.2.1 The dermatologist shall behave professionally in the activities of the organization.
- 4.2.2 As a leader of any organization, the dermatologist shall comply with the code of conduct specified in Article III, Section 7.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

- 4.2.3 As a member, the dermatologist shall respect and observe the existing constitution and bylaws, and the code of ethics of the organization to which he/she belongs.

Section 5: Relationship with government agencies

5.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall have the option to join government agencies.

5.2 Code of conduct

- 5.2.1 The dermatologist shall behave professionally in the activities of the government agencies.
- 5.2.2 The dermatologist shall conduct himself/herself professionally in all government transactions.
- 5.3.3 The dermatologist shall respect and comply with the rules and regulations of government agencies.
- 5.2.4 The dermatologist shall demonstrate professionalism and respect for colleagues, supervisors, and other government employees, fostering a collaborative and positive work environment.
- 5.2.5 The dermatologist shall maintain public trust and confidence through professionalism, integrity, and commitment to ethical conduct.
- 5.2.6 The dermatologist shall ensure that personal interests do not interfere with the integrity of dermatological services and decision-making processes.
- 5.2.7 The dermatologist shall support public health initiatives and efforts to prevent and control dermatological diseases and conditions.

Section 6. Relationship with business companies

6.1 The business company/industry sponsor/pharmaceutical company

- 6.1.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall maintain professional boundaries with business companies and vice-versa.
- 6.1.2 Code of conduct. The dermatologist shall establish and maintain a professional relationship with industry sponsors/business companies, that is transparent, ethical, and in the best interest of patient care.
 - a. The Industrial sponsor/partner shall give the dermatologist full control over the content that will be communicated to the public, be it orally, in print, through electronic media, or via the internet.
 - b. While the dermatologist is discussing a particular topic online, no pharmaceutical or non-pharmaceutical product/s shall appear during the entire duration of his/her discussion (be it stationary, moving, or flashing) in, or across the monitor (called “insert” in media parlance).
 - c. No pharmaceutical company logo or product shall appear on and immediately before or after a dermatologist’s article page or post.
 - d. The industry sponsor/partner shall make arrangements for the dermatologist to review and approve the final article, clip, or post prior to its publication, public viewing, or posting.
 - e. For industry-sponsored clinical trials, the dermatologist shall have educator freedom and responsibility. Professional relations with the industry regarding research shall advance the best interests of patients and dermatology as a specialty. (Details of the guidelines on research may be found in the PDS Administrative Manual)

- f. The dermatologist shall ensure that he/she does not exploit the health product industry, nor allow himself/herself to be exploited in this relationship. He/She shall refrain from soliciting favors from biopharmaceutical and medical device companies for personal interest or gain. The dermatologist shall be guided by the following:
 - i. The dermatologist shall exercise sound judgment, self-restraint, and discipline when participating in activities organized by biopharmaceutical and medical device companies. These activities shall not be perceived as influencing prescribing practices.
 - ii. The dermatologist shall not solely rely on financial support from biopharmaceutical and medical device companies to meet their continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.
 - iii. The dermatologist may serve as a resource person for biopharmaceutical and medical device companies, offering information or advice on topics such as therapeutics, patient needs, and pharmacovigilance. This engagement shall not bind him/her to promote, prescribe, or recommend a particular equipment or product.
 - iv. The dermatologist may accept sponsorship from the health industry provided that the sponsorship does not bind the dermatologist to promote, prescribe, or recommend a particular equipment or product.
 - v. The dermatologist shall not participate in any marketing strategies that bind him/her to promote, prescribe, or recommend a particular equipment or product.

6.2 Hospitals and clinics

6.2.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall respect the professional and ethical boundaries with hospitals and clinics other than those owned by the dermatologist.

6.2.2 Code of conduct

- a. The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2.4, and Article III Sections 1.4, 2.4, 4.4, and 8.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.
- b. The dermatologist shall observe the rules and guidelines of the hospital and clinic.

6.2.3 Institutional advertisements. As a public service to the community and in recognition of the obligation of the PDS to help the public make informed judgments and choices, medical institutions with dermatology departments and sections hereby known as “Institutions” shall be allowed to advertise within the limits set by the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

- a. Names of dermatologists, their pictures, credentials, training experiences and abilities, and clinic schedules are allowed.
- b. Procedures, services, equipment, and machines available in an institution may be enumerated accurately but there shall be no false claims of superiority and exclusivity. If advantages are presented, the disadvantages and risks as well shall be stated. All information presented to the public shall be factual and not misleading. Relevant information shall not be withheld nor presented in any way that may prevent patients from making informed choices.
- c. Pictures of patients may be used provided their written consent was obtained.
- d. The institutions shall have full control over the advertisements. They shall be responsible for the content, layout, and format of the advertisement. Any errors shall be corrected

immediately or as soon as possible in the same publication where the advertisement was published.

6.3 Health management organizations (HMOs)

6.3.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall respect the professional boundaries with HMOs.

6.3.2 Code of conduct

- a. The dermatologist shall comply with Article II, Section 2, and Article III, Sections 1.4, 2.4, 4.4, and 8.4 of the 2024 PDS Code of Ethics.
- b. The dermatologist shall observe the rules and guidelines of HMOs.

Section 7. Relationship with the community

7.1 Overview. The dermatologist shall respect the rights of the community.

7.2 Code of conduct

7.2.1 The dermatologist shall comply with Article III, Section 6.4 of the PDS Code of Ethics 2024.

7.2.2 The dermatologist shall provide evidence-based dermatological information to the general public.

7.2.3 The dermatologist shall provide free services to poor and indigent patients.

ARTICLE V. PDS AS A CME PROVIDER

Section 1. Overview. The PDS, as a Society of dermatologists and CME provider, shall observe ethical and professional standards in dealing with industry sponsors.

Section 2: Code of conduct

- 2.1 The PDS as a CME provider shall make all decisions regarding disposition and disbursement of financial support independent of the influence of sponsors. Sponsors shall not dictate conditions as to planning, presentation, content, and faculty of the CME in exchange for their support. The PDS shall account for the disbursement of the financial support by providing adequate and accurate documentation.
- 2.2 For PDS CME activities, a written mutual agreement shall be approved and entered into by the PDS and the sponsor to document the terms, conditions, and objectives of the activity, including the specifics of the financial or educational support.
- 2.3 PDS educational events shall take priority over any social events or activities planned by the sponsors. The sponsors shall not hold other activities that will compete with the educational event.
- 2.4 Promotional activities on the part of the sponsor or their representatives shall be limited to designated areas only.
- 2.5 Any CME activity that is primarily promotional shall be identified as such to faculty and participants both in its promotion and at the conference itself.
- 2.6 Any educational material of the CME activity such as slides, abstracts, and handouts shall not contain any company logo, symbol, product group message, and the like, as these may be misconstrued as an indirect endorsement.

ARTICLE VI. ETHICAL CONFLICT AND VIOLATIONS

Section 1. Overview. It is crucial to identify conflicts that arise from different roles and relationships, as these can lead to violations of the Code of Ethics. Such violations are considered unethical and unprofessional conduct, warranting disciplinary actions including reprimand, suspension of good standing, and/or revocation of membership and fellow status with the PDS. This section outlines the procedures for identifying conflicts, filing complaints, and addressing violations in a fair and transparent manner.

Section 2. Procedures for the disposition of complaints and violations

- 2.1 All PDS members, including the members of the Committee on Ethics and Board of Directors, or patients and other concerned individual(s), may file a *written and signed* complaint regarding any violation of the Code of Ethics.
 - 2.1.1 An acceptable complaint is one supported by evidence, whether real, testimonial, or documentary.
 - 2.1.2 A written and signed complaint may be dispensed with when there is documentary evidence, such as printed advertisements, published articles, or screenshots of social media postings.
- 2.2 The complaint shall be filed with the Committee on Ethics for discussion and the Committee on Ethics shall send their recommendation/s to the BOARD OF DIRECTORS. A process flow approved by the Committee on Ethics and Board of Directors shall be followed in handling any ethical complaint.
- 2.3 No disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the Society without prior notice and a fair hearing.
- 2.4 The Board of Directors shall have the final decision on the ethical complaint including imposition of sanctions.
- 2.5 The Committee on Ethics shall activate the Oversight Task Force as described in Article XIV of the 2023 PDS Constitution and By-Laws when it has determined that the complaints are not ethical in nature, threaten the integrity of the Society, and involve the performance of duties or violations of the 2023 PDS Constitution and By-Laws by members who hold position of authority.
- 2.6 Activation of the Oversight Task Force may not be done by the Committee on Ethics in events/circumstances specified in Article XIV, Section 2 of the 2023 PDS Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII. SANCTIONS/ PENALTIES

Section 1. *Censure*. Censure is an official written expression of disapproval or condemnation, and shall be relayed after a second offense of similar nature. This may be public censure where the general membership is informed, especially in those cases where the violation is deemed grave. The penalty that shall accompany this censure includes *withholding of the good standing status*.

Section 2. *Probation*. Probation is decided when a third offense of a similar nature has been duly noted. The stated period of time shall depend on the severity of the violation. During this period, the erring dermatologist shall be:

- 2.1 withheld the status of good standing, including the privileges therein;
- 2.2 prohibited from giving lectures at training institutions, annual conventions, and other CME activities (PDS, non-PDS initiated, and industry-sponsored activities), whether local and/or international; and
- 2.3 monitored by the Committee on Membership for continuing eligibility, and may be reviewed periodically by the Committee on Ethics and Board of Directors, both during the probationary period and upon its conclusion.

Section 3. *Suspension.* Suspension or temporary removal of membership privileges for a specified duration of time if the erring dermatologist continues to commit violations after being on probation. These include:

- 3.1 Losing the privilege of being a member of good standing;
- 3.2 Losing the right to hold any position in PDS committees/subspecialties/interest groups;
- 3.3 Losing the right to participate in PDS activities; and
- 3.4 Being prohibited from giving lectures at training institutions, annual conventions, and other CME activities (PDS, non-PDS initiated, and industry-sponsored activities), and shall not be endorsed for international conferences.
- 3.5 At the end of the suspension period, the dermatologist shall petition the Board of Directors for reinstatement of his/her membership privileges and obligations and shall pay a reinstatement fee.

Section 4. *Expulsion.* This is the last resort for the erring dermatologist who continues to disregard the Code of Ethics set forth by the PDS by committing one more violation after being suspended.

- 4.1 The dermatologist's name shall be removed from the roster and mailing list of the PDS.
- 4.2 The dermatologist shall not be allowed to represent himself/herself as a member of the PDS.

Section 5. After thorough study and deliberation of the complaint/case, the Board of Directors, approved by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote, may: (a) opt to mete out sanctions accordingly without following the sequence of sanctions/process flow; or (b) impose additional sanctions/penalties.

Section 6. Furthermore, these sanctions from the PDS Committee on Ethics, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall be elevated by PDS to the Philippine Medical Association and/or Philippine Regulations Commission for their respective action on the transgressions, when all means to resolve the case are exhausted. Legal sanctions may also be imposed upon the erring member for misrepresentation of the PDS.

ARTICLE VIII. CODE OF ETHICS AMENDMENTS

The PDS Code of Ethics shall be amended/ratified by the majority vote of the general membership in good standing. The proposed amendments shall be received by the members at least one month before the ratification.

Votes shall be sent by email, regular mail, or any secure technological platform during the specified voting period or prior to the meeting, subject to the attendance of the voting members during the meeting, in person or by proxy. Proxy votes shall be registered with the Secretary during the period specified by the Board of Directors, otherwise, such votes shall not be counted.

ARTICLE IX. CODE OF ETHICS EFFECTIVITY

This Code of Ethics shall take effect immediately upon its ratification. It shall supersede all other previous Codes of Ethics of the Society.



PHILIPPINE DERMATOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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